



## USW Delegates Passionately Support Resolutions

**U**SW members spoke with emotion and fervor on Wednesday in backing resolutions promoting civil rights and inclusion.

The delegation overwhelmingly supported four resolutions. They are a call to strengthen the union's collective bargaining, continue the fight against unfair trade, support Women of Steel and promote civil rights.

During the debate on the Women of Steel resolution, No. 6, the delegates rose in standing ovation to Inder Johal from District 3, who is running to be a member of the British Columbia legislature. Along with her Women of Steel mentor, Georgi Bates, she said Women of Steel helped in this quest.

Bates said she and Johal "are committed activists who are supported by our local where the president lifts us up and removes barriers that could be placed in our way."

Bates and Johal, from Local 2009, said they were first time delegates who both serve on their Women of Steel and

NextGen committees.

"I am running against a man who has destroyed thousands of steelworker jobs" by allowing raw log exports and who supported regressive tax schemes, Johal told the delegates.

Later, all Women of Steel members were asked to stand and received applause from the assembly.

"The women of Steel training program is awesome," said Liz Cherry, a member of Local 4120 in District 6. But, she said, "There seems to be a glass ceiling above the level of president of the local." She said women needed to be represented in the ranks of higher union officials.

USW President Leo Gerard, who helped establish the Women of Steel program 30 years ago in District 6, said, "At some point we will have women (district) directors, and maybe in my lifetime a woman as president."

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# We can bring the middle class back: Andrea Horwath

**W**orkers across the United States and Canada desperately need strong unions to defend and grow the middle class, delegates heard Wednesday from a leader of the Canadian progressive movement.

"The hard work of unions like the USW expanded the middle class across both of our countries," said Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the province of Ontario.

"Thanks to the Steelworkers, people could earn a good living. Thanks to the Steelworkers, people could own their own home. Thanks to the Steelworkers, parents could send their kids to university.

"The middle class was an achievable reality for millions of workers in Canada and the U.S. I know it feels like that reality is slipping away. But I also know we can bring it back – through the power of unity," Horwath said.

Horwath and her social democratic party stand up every day in the Ontario legislature as a powerful, progressive voice for unions, working families and social and economic justice.

Next year she will lead the New Democrats into an election campaign to end a cycle of corporatist Conservative and Liberal governments whose regressive policies have created greater inequality and killed hundreds of thousands of middle-class jobs.

Horwath said she is proud of the USW's half-century of unwavering support for the NDP – support that will be crucial in electing a social democratic government in Ontario in 2018.

"The idea that by working together we can help not just ourselves, but everyone – is something the New Democratic Party shares with Steelworkers," Horwath said.

"Government should be about giving people a chance at a good life by fighting for good jobs. Jobs that allow you to raise a family, have access to public healthcare and education, and eventually retire in dignity and comfort," she said.



Andrea Horwath, Leader, Ontario New Democratic Party

**"So stay focused on your convention theme  
– The Power of Unity – and let's build a  
future we can all be proud of."**

## You Made Me, You Made the Middle Class: Biden

**F**ormer U.S. Vice President Joe Biden promised USW convention delegates on Wednesday that "as a private citizen" he would work with union members to address economic inequality and rebuild the middle class.

"The labor movement has been under siege, and it has got to stop for the good of the nation," Biden said in a videotaped address. "I'm prepared to work with you. I'm not going away."

Biden credited the USW not only with helping him win his first election, but for fighting for a better life for all workers for 75 years.

"You not only built me, but you built the union movement and you built the middle class," Biden said. "I owe you a lot. All workers, union and nonunion, they all owe you."

Biden said corporate globalization and attacks on labor rights have decimated the middle class, and only the labor movement is equipped to fight back to ensure that all workers have living wages, quality benefits and safe working conditions.

"That's not asking a lot. That's what America has always been," Biden said. "There's a lot more work that needs to be done."



# Steelworkers, the NDP has your back: Tom Mulcair

**T**he USW convention theme reflects an enduring alliance between Steelworkers and the New Democratic Party (NDP) of Canada that has produced historic social and economic change over more than five decades, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair says.

“The history of the United Steelworkers and the New Democratic Party of Canada is a story of the power of unity,” Mulcair said in his convention address Wednesday.

“We are rooted in the values of equality, justice and opportunity. We believe a fair economy should lift everyone up, not just the few at the top. And that by staying united we will leave a better, fairer world to future generations. That is what unites us all here in this room.”

The USW was a founding partner of the social democratic NDP in 1961. The NDP and allies including the labor movement established Canada’s single-payer, public medicare system and fostered numerous programs and legislation that built a prosperous and more equal society.

However, Canada is becoming increasingly unequal as Conservative and Liberal governments embrace a right-wing agenda that is decimating the middle class, Mulcair said.

“It’s not surprising that the gap between the wealthy and everyone else is growing.”

The federal Liberal government is “pursuing the same wrong-headed trade deals and policies that have been destroying good jobs for decades,” he said.

The Liberals support NAFTA, have signed a corporate-friendly trade agreement with the European Union and are actively trying to save the Trans Pacific Partnership.

The NDP is “taking on the Liberals and pushing for action against steel dumping, especially from China, which is

threatening the steel industry and costing Canadians tens of thousands of jobs,” Mulcair said.

New Democrats are fighting for working people and an equal society, like Steelworkers have been doing for 75 years.

“As Canadian Director Ken Neumann often says, the NDP has no stronger friend than the Steelworkers, and the Steelworkers have no stronger friend than the NDP.

“Brothers and sisters, know that the NDP has your back. Know that we will fight for your rights, day in and day out.”



Thomas Mulcair, Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

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## Jefferson Awards Winners Honored

USW convention delegates celebrated the charity work and community service of their fellow union members on Wednesday with the USW Cares Jefferson Awards for Public Service.

The union established the USW Cares program two years ago to honor the community work of our members, to inspire others to get involved and to shed light on causes that need support.

The Jefferson Awards, given both locally and nationally since 1972, are considered the “Nobel Prize” of community service. The USW is the first union to partner with the Jefferson Awards.

“The work of our activists and leaders doesn’t end at the union hall. That work extends into our communities where we live and work,” said Vice President Carol Landry in introducing the USW’s honorees. “Steelworkers are tough, but Steelworkers have big hearts.”

On Wednesday, delegates celebrated the 2016 national award winner, Priscilla Puente of Local 13-227 in Pasadena, Texas. She was honored for helping to establish a scholarship

fund for domestic abuse victims to obtain training and education that could help them find good jobs.

“Go home and spread the word and change a life,” Puente urged the delegates, who greeted her with a standing ovation.

2017’s top USW winner, Nancy McCurrach of Local 1944 in Western Canada, was honored for recruiting volunteers for a “Refugee Welcome Wagon” to assist 600 Syrian refugees, including 200 children.

In the past two years, more than 250 USW members have been nominated for Jefferson Awards. An independent panel of judges selects award winners from each USW district and from SOAR.

Amanda Johnson, national director for the Jefferson Awards Foundation, said the kindness and generosity of USW members has been evident all week in her interactions with delegates.

Johnson challenged delegates to nominate members for future awards.

“The USW has redefined the Jefferson Awards Champions program,” Johnson said.

# Australian, American, Canadian Workers Face Similar Struggles

**M**arina Chambers, national president of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU), described how the 126-year-old labor organization is facing many of the same challenges as the 75-year-old USW, including unfair trade and the offshoring of work.

She noted that Australia's steel industry has been damaged by unfair imports and described how the wine industry is sending its product overseas in bladders to be bottled.

In addition, like in the United States and Canada, union density in Australia has declined. It is down to 17 percent, Chambers reported. That is, however, significantly higher than the 11 percent rate in the United States. In Canada, the rate is 29 percent, but that is down from 38 percent in 1981.

The AWU represents workers in a variety of industries, including steel, aluminum, mining, glass and manufacturing, just like the USW. The two unions have supported each other in challenges over the years said Chambers, the AWU's first female president.

Chambers said that part of the decline in union membership in Australia is significant job losses in the steel industry caused by unfairly dumped steel during the past five years. That also has been the experience in steel employment in the United States and Canada over that period.

With the help of labor-oriented lawmakers, she said the AWU has been able to work with steel companies in bankruptcy to save jobs and change product lines to preserve employment in the future.

If those employers and jobs had been lost, communities would have been devastated, she said. That has already occurred in both Canada and the United States.



Marina Chambers, National President, Australian Workers' Union

## Passionate Resolution Discussion

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The resolution passed unanimously, as did Resolution No. 7 on Civil and Human Rights, obligating each local to form an activist civil and human rights corps, which will oppose oppression including as voter suppression.

In speaking for the resolution, Nik Redman of Local 1998 in District 6 said his local is among the most diverse, and it stuck by him as he made the transition from female to male.

"Lift up your brothers and sisters who work with you every day," Marvin White, president of Local 1685 in District 13, said to the delegates in support of the resolution.

He said he grew up in a poverty-stricken community but moved at age 14 into the home of an uncle who was a member of the United Auto Workers. That gave him an opportunity to see the life that was possible with union membership. "We come up a little different. Our struggles are different," he said, urging delegates to try to understand each other.

Earlier in the day, members spoke strongly in favor of Resolution No. 9 – "Collective Bargaining," which dedicated the USW to prioritizing fighting for fair and equitable contracts and supporting members on strike or lockout.

"Collective bargaining is the soul of our union," said Dean Showers of Local 6996 in District 10, "This union does not waver in supporting our members in any struggle."

Resolution No. 11 – "International Trade" – commits the USW to fighting for trade policies that raise living standards for workers and create and maintain jobs in North America.

Tom O'Shei of Local 135L at the Sumitomo tire factory in Buffalo, N.Y., in District 4 said the USW's work on trade was

directly responsible for saving jobs and ensuring the long-term viability of his workplace.

"I'm a direct beneficiary of the Steelworkers trade cases," O'Shei said. "We went from a plant that was struggling to survive to a plant that has gotten \$100 million in investments."



**Clayola Brown, president of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute (APRI), urged convention delegates on Wednesday to never give up the fight for justice and economic equality.**